

Agriculture-department rulemaking and market development
(HB 524, by Laney)

DIGEST:

The bill would have amended some outdated sections of the Agriculture Code to bring rulemaking into compliance with the Administrative Procedures Act. A Senate amendment would have permitted the Texas Department of Agriculture to "participate in any public or private corporation or association whose purpose is to enhance the marketing or exportation of Texas agricultural products."

GOVERNOR'S
REASONS
FOR VETO:

The intent of the Senate amendment was laudable, but the language was too vague. The bill would not have limited the state's role in a private corporation to that of an intermediary. The state could have become legally liable for "matters negotiated...under this legislation." The Governor said the bill should be redrawn and resubmitted.

SPONSOR'S
VIEW:

Rep. Laney said he was not disturbed by the veto. The original HB 524 was designed to clean up the Agriculture Code's language on rulemaking. The TDA later requested an amendment allowing it to help cooperatives collaborate in setting up agricultural markets. Laney had no objections to the amendment, since TDA officials assured him they were not trying to involve the state inappropriately in private business. But the Governor's lawyers didn't agree with the way the amendment was worded. Laney said he would reintroduce the legislation if the Governor's office and TDA could work out acceptable language.

Deadline for property rendition statements
(HB 534, by Peveto)

DIGEST:

The bill would have changed from May 1 to April 1 the deadline for filing property reports and rendition statements with a taxing authority's chief appraiser. (A rendition statement is a written description of a business's property other than real estate.) Upon the written request of a property owner, a chief appraiser would have been required to extend the filing deadline to April 30.

GOVERNOR'S
REASONS
FOR VETO:

The bill would have placed unnecessary restriction on average taxpayers.

SPONSOR'S

VIEW:

Rep. Peveto said the average taxpayer doesn't have to file a rendition statement, so the bill's earlier deadline would not have burdened them. Appraisal districts now have until May 15 to make their records final. Peveto said the districts wanted more time, but some major taxpayers--primarily utilities--didn't think they could meet the proposed April 1 deadline. "We hit a compromise that both sides were happy with," he said, referring to the provision granting an automatic 30-day extension upon a taxpayer's written request. "God only knows why he vetoed it," Peveto said. "He never called and talked to me."

Valid signatures on voters' petitions

(HB 730, by C. Evans)

DIGEST:

HB 730 would have set new standards for petitions seeking to have a name or proposal placed on a ballot. The signer's printed name, residence address, the date of signing, and voter-registration number would have been required. The county of registration would have been noted if the voting district covered more than one county. Authorities could have used statistical samples to verify petitions of 1,000 or more signatures.

GOVERNOR'S

REASONS

FOR VETO:

"The restrictions imposed upon petitioners by this bill are so onerous as to make the submission of a valid petition to a local authority virtually impossible."

SPONSOR'S

VIEW:

Rep. Evans said he disagreed with the Governor's assessment that the petition procedures would be onerous. Existing law makes it more onerous and costly for city and county employees to verify that petition signers are eligible to vote, Evans said. "Someday we're going to have to move into the 20th century" with petition procedures, Evans said. He said he would reintroduce the bill.

NOTES:

The HSG analysis of this bill appeared in the March 28 Daily Floor Report.